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SUBJECT: MAS INSIGHT INTO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Krishna Urs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Raul Prada, a MAS insider and Constituent Assembly representative, confirmed President Morales' plans for an all-powerful Assembly which would seek to remove all traces of colonialism from Bolivian society. Prada said procedural issues for the Assembly remain pending but he expected representatives to agree on a two-thirds vote on high profile issues and a simple majority on others. Morales' plan to have social sectors "oversee" the Assembly, Prada said, will strengthen Bolivia's participative democracy. His leftist discourse, which includes legitimate goals such as ending racial discrimination and ethnic inequality, was philosophical and largely unsupported by concrete details for how the MAS will achieve its goals. Worryingly, it appears that President Morales is positioning the syndical interests to impose his communitarian vision of a syndicalist central-committee-like structure upon the Bolivian state, using MAS intellectuals like Prada to attempt to justify this potentially undemocratic revolution. End summary.

¶2. (C) Poloff met with Raul Prada, a MAS insider and Constituent Assembly representative, August 10 to hear Prada's views of MAS goals for the new constitution. Prada, a former sociology professor, is a close associate of Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera. He described the MAS as having three main divisions--an intellectual-indigenous wing (of which Prada and Garcia Linera are part), an political-electoral wing (led by Morales), and a sindicalist wing (cocaleros and other labor unions).

¶3. (C) Prada confirmed President Morales' plans for an all-powerful Assembly, which he said would seek to remove all traces of colonialism from Bolivian society. According to Prada, the current state powers perpetuate colonial influence and marginalize the indigenous; the Assembly must therefore build a new more inclusive state. While he spoke of sweeping reforms to right the wrongs of the past, he was not able (nor perhaps completely willing) to clearly articulate how the MAS plans to achieve these goals. He did, however, mention eliminating Bolivia's nine departments in favor of smaller divisions based on geography or indigenous communities.

Prada said the Assembly would correct economic disparity and blamed business leaders and large landowners for having a disproportionate share of Bolivia's wealth and land. According to Prada, the opposition, which has resisted an Assembly to "refound" Bolivia, is beginning to understand the importance of an Assembly with unlimited powers.

¶4. (C) Prada said procedural issues for the Assembly remain pending but he expected representatives to agree on a two-thirds vote on high profile issues and a simple majority on others. He said the MAS wanted a simple majority vote on all matters, but that both the MAS and the opposition would have to compromise. MAS delegates will meet August 12-13 to reach consensus on rules for the Assembly. Then, the Assembly will vote on its rules of debate as its first order of business August 15. Regarding the Assembly's structure, Prada believed the commissions would be organized by topic (e.g., land reform, autonomy, etc.). He noted that land reform would be the most controversial and complicated issue for the Assembly.

¶5. (C) Morales' plan to have social sectors "oversee" the Assembly, Prada said, will strengthen Bolivia's "participative democracy" (borrowing this Venezuelan term). He said the social sectors, working out of what press reports indicate will be government-funded offices in Sucre, will have better access to information surrounding the Assembly and will be able to ensure that the Assembly considers their proposals. At least five organizations are planning to send representatives.

¶6. (C) Comment: There is little doubt about Prada's strong leftist leanings and he is arguably one of the MAS' most

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articulate philosophers. His discourse, which includes legitimate goals such as ending racial discrimination and ethnic inequality, was philosophical and largely unsupported by concrete details for how the MAS will achieve its goals. It is striking that even one of the MAS' key theoreticians is unable to clearly articulate the party's vision for the Constituent Assembly. This very failing merely underscores the MAS dilemma in seeking common ground as a movement comprising intellectuals, pragmatic politicians, and powerful syndical interests. Worryingly, it appears that President Morales is positioning the syndical interests to impose his communitarian vision of a syndicalist central-committee-like structure upon the Bolivian state. Clearly, MAS intellectuals like Prada are fully engaged in seeking to justify this potentially undemocratic revolution. End comment.
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